

**THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
CLEVELAND 6. OHIO**

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A new acquisition CHRIST BEING NAILED TO THE CROSS brings to The Cleveland Museum of Art a masterpiece of Austrian miniature painting of the late Gothic period. It is identified in scholarly literature with the productions of the 'Lehrbuchmeister' who acquired his name by painting miniatures for three schoolbooks for the young Prince Maximilian I (later Emperor).

The 'Lehrbuchmeister' was a pupil of the famous Albrecht, miniaturist, who was the outstanding Austrian miniaturist of his time. His miniatures are found not only in the schoolbooks of Maximilian I, but in the Horae of Maximilian's mother, the Empress Eleonora of Portugal, and in a splendid missal executed for King Matthias Corvinus, one of the great bibliophiles of his day. His period of artistic activity dated from 1465 to 1480 which were the years preceding the end of the tradition of the hand-produced and decorated book. His work preserves the feeling of the older aristocratic tradition which had been replaced in the work of his Flemish and French contemporaries by the livelier and somewhat coarser style created for the businessman patron. The persistence of the older style in Austria reflects the continued dominance of the nobility there.

The outstretched figure of Christ dominates the center of the Museum's new illuminated page. Two men in the foreground are seen nailing Him to the cross. At the left is the skull of Adam and various implements for digging. Behind, on the left, are the two Marys in blue robes and white head pieces and John the Evangelist wearing a pink robe. They are haloed. Two more heads with haloes are just barely visible behind these three. To the right of the composition are several spectators, including a knight in armor who holds an axe, and a Pharisee with mace in hand. Protruding from the group are several spears; attached to one of these is a scorpion banner denoting the enemies of Christ. Beyond and also continuing into the foreground is a fresh green meadow with clumps of trees and small bushes. At the horizon are blue hills. The sky is dark blue, with a pattern of coiled gold sprays.

This illumination is greatly prized for its unified design, its colorful jewel-like quality, its precision in the use of line and space, its unusual iconography and fine state of preservation. The depiction of curious individual facial expressions, of the splendid Gothic suit of armor, of the various tools and arms, and other details are also factors which give this tiny page its considerable charm.

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